

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AR

SUBJECT: VIDELA SPEECH ON POLITICAL PROPOSAL ADDS LITTLE  
THAT IS NEW; JUNTA POSTPONES DISCUSSION OF FOURTH MAN THEME

REF: (A) BUENOS AIRES 9753 (B) BUENOS AIRES 9779

SUMMARY: VIDELA'S SPEECH ADDED LITTLE BEYOND  
REAFFIRMING THAT A POLITICAL DIALOGUE WOULD BE  
INITIATED NEXT YEAR ALONG WITH AN ARTICULATION  
OF THE POLITICAL PLAN FOR THE FUTURE. ON A  
SEPARATE MATTER, THE JUNTA HAS POSTPONED ITS  
DISCUSSION OF THE FOURTH MAN ISSUE UNTIL NEXT WEEK.  
END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT VIDELA'S ADDRESS TO THE ARGENTINE  
CHAMBER OF ADVERTISERS TUESDAY EVENING,  
DECEMBER 21, REVEALED VERY LITTLE THAT HE HAS  
NOT SAID BEFORE WITH RESPECT TO THE GOVERNMENT'S  
LONG RANGE AIM OF NORMALIZING AND DEMOCRATICIZING  
THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN ARGENTINA. MOST OF THE  
SPEECH WAS PHRASED IN TERMS OF IDEALS AND PRINCIPLES.  
THERE WERE FEW CLUES AS TO THE STATE OF PLAY WITHIN  
THE ARMED FORCES ON THE KEY ISSUES OR THE SHAPE OF THE  
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POLITICAL MODEL WHICH VIDELA WAS STRIVING TO CREATE.

2. AMONG THE POINTS WE FOUND INTERESTING WERE THE FOLLOWING:  
(A) THE SPEECH CONTAINED A CLEAR STATEMENT THAT IT WAS THE  
INTENTION OF THE ARMED FORCES TO PRESENT TO THE COUNTRY --  
SOMETIME IN 1978 -- A PROPOSAL FOR ACHIEVING "NATIONAL UNITY".  
VIDELA SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM AND CORRESPONDING

POLITICAL ACTION PLAN WOULD BE FORMULATED ON THE BASIS OF A DIALOGUE ALSO TO BE CONOKED SOMETIME IN 1978 WITH "REPRESENTATIVE FIGURES OF THE SECTORS AND TENDENCIES WHICH CONSTITUTE THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY".

(B) VIDELA SEEMS TO SUGGEST THAT THE MODEL WHICH EVENTUALLY WOULD EMERGE WOULD NOT BE THAT OF THE CLASSICAL WESTERN CIVILIAN, POLITICAL DEMOCRACY. HE STATED THAT ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE POLITICAL PLAN BEING DEVELOPED BY THE GOVERNMENT WAS TO "ASSURE THE INSERTION OF THE ARMED FORCES IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM WITH THE AIM OF FACILITATING THEIR PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING."

(C) HE DEVOTED A PARAGRAPH TO THE IMPORTANT THOUGHT THAT THE POLITICAL MODEL OF THE FUTURE HAD TO ALLOW FOR DIFFERENT CURRENTS OF OPINION AND THE RIGHT TO DISSENT ("WITHIN THE LIMITS ESTABLISHED BY FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE NATIONAL SPIRIT").

(D) WHILE DECLARING THAT 1978 WILL BE YEAR IN WHICH THE POLITICAL DIALOGUE WILL COMMENCE AND THE POLITICAL PLAN WILL BE ANNOUNCED, VIDELA REAFFIRMED THE USUAL POINT THAT NO TIME FRAME HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR FULFILLING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE NATIONAL REORGANIZATION PROCESS (I.E. TERMINATING THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT) OR FOR PUTTING INTO EFFECT THE FUTURE POLITICAL MODEL.

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3. COMMENT: POLITICAL OBSERVERS AROUND TOWN PROFESS TO SEE REASSURANCES IN THE SPEECH THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING THE IMPLICATIONS OF INTERIOR MINISTER HARGUINDEGUY'S RECENT COMMENTS TO THE CONTRARY, THERE WILL BE A PLACE FOR (AT LEAST THE REFORMED) PERONIST POLITICIANS IN VIDELA'S POLITICAL MODEL.

4. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT AN AGREEMENT HAS NOT YET BEEN REACHED WITHIN THE FARMY FOR MOVING THE COUNTRY DOWN THE ROAD TOWARDS A NORMALIZED POLITICAL SYSTEM AND WE DO NOT EXPECT ANY EARTHSHAKING DECISIONS TO EMERGE WITH REGARD TO THIS QUESTION FROM THIS WEEK'S SERIES OF IMPORTANT MILITARY MEETINGS. A CIVILIAN SOURCE IN THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENCY CONFESSED TO US THE OTHER DAY THAT IT WAS TAKING FAR GREATER TIME FOR VIDELA TO PUT TOGETHER A POLITICAL PLAN THAN ORIGINALLY WAS ANTICIPATED. THE SOURCE MAINTAINS, HOWEVER, THAT VIDELA'S INTENT REMAINS STRONG THAT HIS NEXT TERM AS PRESIDENT (1979-1982) WOULD SEE THE HOLDING OF A NATIONAL REFERENDUM WITH REGARD TO THE FUTURE STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT AND THE CREATION OF A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY TO WRITE A NEW CONSTITUTION, FOLLOWED BY THE

LAUNCHING OF A NEW CONSTITUTIONAL REPUBLIC WHICH MIGHT INCLUDE SUCH INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATIONS AS A COUNCIL OF STATE. THE SOURCE SPOKE WITH SUFFICIENT AMBIGUITY TO PERSUADE US THAT THESE ARE STILL IDEAS THAT ARE FLOATING AROUND IN THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE THAT DO NOT YET HAVE THE CONCURRENCE OF THE ARMY -- LET ALONG THAT OF THE OTHER TWO SERVICES. END COMMENT.

5. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, DISCUSSION OF GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION AND THE FOURTH MAN THEME WAS DISPLACED ON THE AGENDA OF THE DECEMBER 22 JUNTA MEETING BY THE NEED TO HAVE A FULL AIRING OF THE BEAGLE CHANNEL DISPUTE. THE JUNTA HAS NOW RESCHEDULED ITS CONSIDERATION OF THE FOURTH MAN ISSUE FOR NEXT WEEK, IN TWO MEETINGS TO BE HELD ON DECEMBER 27 AND 29.

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## Message Attributes

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